13: Khin Zaw I-5 (no date) 1940 AP1 Burma
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[114] Now comes the time to discuss the technical remarks of Mr. Paul Edmonds and Mr. P. A. Mariano mentioned at the beginning of this article. In Chap. VII of his *Peacocks and Pagodas* (Routledge, 1924) Paul Edmonds says:

> Hla Tin having fixed up his mandolin proceeded to play me a tune. The tune, he said, was the introduction to the "baw lè," and the "baw lè" is the tune to which all songs of a sad and plaintive character are commonly sung—though there is nothing about the tune that sounds sad to the western ears[1]. The short introduction was in two parts, the lower being a kind of rough counterpoint[2]. It is played at the beginning, between every verse, and at the end. I wrote it down on paper in western notation after several repetitions, (*See* Example 4), and upon examining the upper part, or tune, was interested to find that it was apparently in the pentatonic scale. I then successfully transcribed the "baw lè" tune proper, (*See* Example 6), but this was, I found, approximately in our ordinary major scale, and it was difficult to say for certain whether or not the tune had originally been pentatonic[3].

Paul Edmonds also examined the xylophone (*pattalar*), the drum-circle (*saingwaing*), and the gong-circle (*kyi-waing*) and said:

> The pattala, which seemed to be in the key of C, had an eight-note scale; but at first I was puzzled to classify it, since in the upper octave the note B was nearer to B-flat than to B-natural, whereas in the lower octave it was the other way about. How to account for an approximate B-flat in one octave and an approximate B-natural in the octave in the same instrument was a problem[4]. The note F in both octaves was indeterminate. It seemed to be about midway between F and F-sharp[5].
>
> This first suggested to me what I now believe to be the true explanation, which is that the pentatonic scale is the foundation and that notes have been roughly inserted in the two gaps between E and G and between A and C in order to make the scale approximate to the Western major scale. I was not sure of this at that time, but subsequent investigations confirmed it.

I wish Paul Edmonds had left a full account of his investigations. It would be a real service not only to future research but also to Burmese music. While heartily agreeing with him that the pentatonic scale was the foundation of the Burmese scale, I hesitate

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1. No wonder. Hla Tin has spoilt the plaintive part of the tune with a variation: (*See* Example 7) the last beat of the third bar leading down to the tonic in the beginning of the bar following. These five notes are characteristic of the *baw-lè* cadence, and of the original Burmese tonality. Harmonically, they form the arpeggio of the tonic major chord with added sixth like the arpeggio ending to Grieg's *To the Spring* in F-sharp major.

2. P.E. apparently here refers to Hla Tin's thumb work. When playing the mandolin a Burman does not use the plectrum. Forefinger and thumb are employed, the latter to strike an occasional lower octave or the Fourth or the Fifth, or to help the forefinger along with the melody. The result perhaps often sounds like rough counterpoint. But the tune was certainly not in two parts. The division is of labour, not thematic.

3. It could not be. *Baulè* is a very much later invention attributed to Hlaing-Htèik-Khaung-Tin (1835-1875 A.D.) an excellent summary of whose life translated by Nyi Nyi from the excellent series of short biographies of famous Burmese authoresses by Ma Ma Gyi, appeared in the *World of Books* Nos. 136-137. U Thein Han (Zaw Gyi) points out the germ of the *baw-lè* tune in the concluding part of a *patpyo* "ya-goe-myaing-gyar" attributed by some to Myawadiwungyi and by others to Hlaing-Htèik-Khaung-Tin's own mother Ma Mya Gale.

4. I would blame its maker. My *pattalar* reveals just the opposite.

5. It is still there.

14: Brant E-5 (1949-50) 1954 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

III

SOCIAL GROUPS AND RELATIONS

In this section we describe the patterns of kinship and interpersonal relations, the beliefs and customs pertaining to the life cycle of the individual associations, and intergroup relations.*

Kinship

The kinship system reflects very clearly the bilateral family structure in the absence of terminological differentiation on the basis of the sex of the connecting relative. The other outstanding characteristic is the recognition at many points of relative age. For each generation a distinct set of kinship terms is employed. On the speaker's (ego's) generation, all cousins are merged with siblings, the terms being differentiated, however, according to relative age. In the first ascending generation, the parents' siblings are differentiated according to the degree of age relative to the parent. In the first descending generation the factor of relative age loses significance; sex is the sole basis of differentiation of kinship terms, except for separate terms to distinguish the speaker's own children from others. On successive descending generations sex distinction is absent and all relatives of a given generation are subsumed under a single kinship term.

Relative age is the all-important hub upon which the wheel of village social life revolves. Deference to one's elders is reflected in such customs as carrying objects for them, refraining from sitting with one's head higher than those of elders, and avoiding postures in which the feet are extended towards such persons.

Beyond such matters of etiquette, the importance of age is even more fundamentally demonstrated in the showing of obeisance to one's elders. This is done on all the important ceremonial occasions. Four such occasions are regarded as obligatory times for paying one's respects. These are the beginning and the end of Waso (sometimes called the Buddhist 'Lent'), a period of about three months, roughly from mid-July to mid-October; the New Year; and the harvest. Respect is paid to all of one's elders in the parental generation and above. A visit is made at which an offering, valuable or symbolic, is brought and the elder's blessings are received.

Interpersonal Relations

Husband and Wife. The household is normally composed of husband and wife and their offspring. It is a bilateral, limited type of family structure, contrasting markedly with the patrilineal extended Chinese family and the joint family of India. Unlike the position of the wife in the traditional Chinese and Indian family systems, that of the Burmese wife is not one of an outsider living in a group dominated by her husband's relatives. Where a married couple reside is a matter of choice and is decided very largely on the basis of economic opportunity. When there is such opportunity in the village for an outsider who marries a girl of Tadagale, he is urged to establish their residence there, but there is no particular pressure or feeling about the

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*The material on kinship and the life cycle, with certain changes, was published under the title "Burmese Kinship and the Life Cycle: an Outline" in Southwestern Journal of Anthropology, vol 7, no 4, 1951, pp. 437-454. The reader interested in the technical details of the kinship terms and a diagrammatic presentation of the kinship system is referred to that article. The author wishes to express his thanks to Mi Mi Khaing for valuable assistance in the compilation and analysis of the material on this aspect of the culture.

21: Htin Aung E-5 (ca. 1930) 1937 AP1 Burma
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have been celebrated year after year, at least since the reintroduction of Buddhism in 1056, and at least since March, 638, when an early king of Pagan, Popa Sawrahan (613–40), drew up the present Burmese era, the dawn of every Burmese new year has been the occasion for mirthful water-throwing.[1]

Buddhism had been introduced into the country through commercial relations with India long before the foundation of the kingdom of Pagan, but from the beginning it was only at second-hand and therefore feeble. The real religion of the Burmese before the reintroduction of Buddhism in 1056 was animistic, and they worshipped various spirits, known as *nats*. There were mediums, mostly women, who danced to please the spirits, and as the spirits were supposed to enter into the bodies of the mediums, sometimes it was believed that the spirits, and not the mediums, were actually dancing. Sometimes the medium herself actually believed that a spirit had taken control of her body, but usually she only pretended that a spirit had entered her, and gave an exhibition of acting. As the medium of each particular *nat* dressed herself in appropriate clothes, the spirit dances were essentially dramatic.[2] When Buddhism, in one of its purest forms, was introduced under Anawrahta, the great king realized the impossibility of attracting people suddenly to the new faith; so he compromised by recognizing the *nats* as Buddhist spirits and giving them shrines in his Shwezigôn Pagoda as its guardian spirits. When asked the reason, Anawrahta replied: 'Men will not come suddenly to the new faith. Let them come for their old gods, and they will gradually be won over.'[3]

So the worship of the *nats* lived on, and with the advance of

[1] Shway-Yoe (Sir George Scott) in *The Burman: His Life and Notions*, and Fielding Hall in *The Soul of a People* give detailed accounts of the feasts and life in the villages. However, as far as I have been able to find out, the Tazaungmôn celebrations have never been described in any English work.

[2] These dances are still performed on spirit-feast days at Taungbyôn (near Mandalay), a small town given up to spirit worship since the days of Pagan's greatness and perhaps even before.

The belief in, as distinct from the worship of, spirits is not alien to Buddhism.

The chief works on the subject are: Sir R. C. Temple, *The Thirty-Seven Nats*; Grant Brown, 'The Taungbyon Festival' in *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, 1915; the same author's 'The Pre-Buddhist Religion of the Burmese' in *Folk-Lore*, 1921; and G. E. Harvey, *History of Burma*.

[3] G. E. Harvey, op. cit., p. 33.

21: Htin Aung · E-5 (ca. 1930) 1937 AP1 Burma
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who put themselves under the patronage and protection of some noble lord in Elizabethan England.

Though the various plays presented at court were performed all over the country in little towns and little courts, the *Rama* play alone reached the remotest corners of the country, and it alone took root in the hearts of the people. What they wanted was action, and of the court plays, only *Rama* could satisfy the desire for action. The original Siamese version had been dead for some time even at court, and what the people saw were adaptations, which contained elements borrowed from the *Nibhatkhin* and the interlude. The story was shortened, many of the palace-scenes cut out, romantic love-scenes between Rama and Sita put in, and the demon king became a comic villain, whom everyone laughed at and liked. The villain as a popular comic character was borrowed straight from the *Nibhatkhin* and the interlude, where the Burmese equivalent of the devil in the English miracle plays, kept the audience in roars of laughter.

There was another important reason why the *Rama* play was so popular, and why the play became more and more Burmese. Under King Singu, while the court contented itself with the Siamese version, a poet outside the court circle broke completely away from the Siamese tradition and recast the story in a purely native form. U Toe, who became famous among the people under Singu and who was given official rewards and recognition under Bodawpaya, was termed the 'Great Master of the *Yagan*'. The *Yagan* is a romance in verse. It probably developed out of the *Hanza*, a dramatic recitation of a story, but in the *Yagan* the dramatic element is subordinated to poetic description. The most famous of U Toe's *Yagans* was the *Rama-yagan*. In the history of Burmese poetry it enjoys a very important place. It is famous for the clearness and beauty of the language, for beautifully coined words and for richness in imagery. He may be termed the Burmese 'poet's poet' because his language inspired other poets to imitate his style. The *Rama-yagan* was studied by his courtier-contemporaries although he was outside the court; and imitations of his style are found in the works of Burmese authors, including U Pon Nya and authors of the present day.[1]

●[113]

[1] An admirable account (in Burmese) of the importance of the *Rama-yagan* in Burmese literature and its influence on U Pon Nya is given in U Po Kya's *The Water-seller's Play of U Pon Nya*, a textbook of the Council of National Education.

21: Htin Aung E-6 (ca. 1980) 1957 AP1 Burma
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guess that the interlude was rapidly becoming heroic when the popularity of U Awbatha's works showed it the way to better things.

The return of the interlude to the fold of the *Jataka* did in no way make the drama suffer. The range was not narrowed, because the Birth Stories were numerous and they were concerned with all classes of society and all classes of events. The *Jataka* was a developed art. Some of the stories existed in India long before the time of the Buddha and therefore they were artistically finished through retelling by generation after generation. In short, the *Jataka* was an artistic and finished short story. It was religious and it concerned itself with a moral, but the moral suggested itself and was not pointed out; the artistic qualities of the *Jataka* did not suffer because it was never pointedly didactic. Moreover, a *Jataka* contained always some interpretation of life, a view of life from a different standpoint. Therefore the interlude gained by returning to the Birth Stories for its themes.[1]

2. The Life of U Kyin U

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The existing accounts regarding the life of U Kyin U are very meagre. Even those were obtained only through painstaking research by the learned editors of the Burma Research Society's editions of his two plays, *Purpaheis* and *Dayasagoukan*.

U Kyin U lived during the reigns of Bagyidaw (1819–37) Tharrawaddy (1837–46) and Pagan (1846–53). The exact dates of his life and writings are not known. He was a native of the little town of Sinbaungwe, but he migrated to the capital where he wrote his works, returning to his native town when he had retired from active literary and dramatic life. He was learned and knew Pali, Burmese literature, Burmese history and probably Siamese; at least he knew the Siamese court drama well. He probably first won fame as a writer of songs and speeches for characters on the stage, and in later life a collection of these was published. After he had thus won fame, he probably either set up a troupe of actors of his own or was engaged by such a troupe as its official dramatist; in any case, he was connected with the acting profession and the stage, and he wrote his plays in outline only, many scenes being left to be filled in later when the plays were being presented, very probably under his direction; his plays were merely stage copies and were not intended to be read. He won fame as dramatist

[13]

[1] For this section, I am greatly indebted to my sister's M.A. thesis at Rangoon University, entitled *The Jataka in Burma*.

21: Htin Aung E-5 (ca. 1930) 1937 AP1 Burma
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could not and did not achieve success, even though the translator was the learned scholar and journalist, U Shwe Kyu.[1] The translations went unnoticed, and as the magazine became defunct in 1913, the precious issues which contain them are now available only in some libraries. After this failure to introduce Shakespeare into the vernacular, no further attempt was made, and Burmese is one of the very few civilized languages into which the plays of the great dramatist have not been successfully translated.

In 1919, after the Great War, a wave of national aspiration swept over Asia, and Burma was affected by it. With the resulting revival of interest in Burmese institutions, the study of U Kyin U and U Pon Nya has become again popular, not only in schools and colleges, but all over the country. In schools following the established educational practice of prescribing Shakespeare's plays as textbooks, the plays of U Kyin U and U Pon Nya are now so prescribed. The newly established Rangoon University, founded by the Government in 1920, the Burma Research Society[2] and the Burma Book Club—institutions founded by the British Government and University officials interested in Burmese history and literature, encouraged and led to the study of Burmese literature, including the drama, side by side with the English. And when adaptations in Burmese of a play by Molière and another by Tchekov appeared in 1928 in the magazine of the Book Club,[3] there were hopes that a new drama was in course of being developed. But the study has been from the beginning independent of and unconnected with, the theatre of the professional actors, who are in great demand and still popular with the majority of the people. Therefore the interest in the drama, even though spread beyond the university walls, remains academic rather than practical. And as far as I can see, there are no signs of the coming in the near future of a new national drama.

[1] The magazine in which the translation appeared was the *Shwe Kyu Magazine*, and U Shwe Kyu was its founder and editor.

[2] The Text Publication Committee of the Research Society has published U Kyin U's *Dayawgyaba* and *Parpaleim* with editorial notes, contributing much to our knowledge of the dramatist.

[3] The adaptations were from English translations of the two plays. English is the only medium of contact with the western drama for the Burmese, and, as in India, the influence of other European literatures can come only through English channels.

Zla. Htin Aung B-5 (ca. 1930) 1937 AP1 Burma
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to be under the direct control of the state. But as living actors were now past such control, he turned his attention towards puppets, which were in great demand by the people. He realized the possibilities of puppets in the newly arisen national drama. The puppet show, which was then entirely independent of the drama and the living actors, started with different animals coming out one by one, and each gave a special dance to a particular tune of its own, played by the orchestra, then a *zawgyee*[1] appeared and danced, and finally, a prince and princess came out, made love, sang and danced. The puppets were from 2½ to 3 feet in height, and were worked by strings. As stage, there was a raised platform, with a black curtain, behind which the show-men stood and manipulated the puppets. The men's hands were visible, but as the platform was about four feet high and the audience had to look up, the hands did not distinctly come into the line of vision. The platform was about twenty feet in length, and the width of the part in front of the curtain was about four feet.

536 * 175 [534]

The minister put the puppet show under direct state patronage and control. Under him the puppet show became similar to an ordinary dramatic presentation except that puppets performed instead of living actors. The use of puppets to act the play of course caused the introduction of new puppets, but it also rendered the *zawgyee* and animal puppets unnecessary; yet they were retained all

536 * 175 [656]

[1] *Zawgyee* is the Burmese term for an alchemist. It is a derivative of the Indian word *yogi* but the Burmese alchemist has little in common with the Indian ascetic. It is an example of how names of Pali and semi-Buddhist origin were applied to already-existing native ideas.

789 822 [198]

A man (but not a woman) becomes a *zawgyee* when he has introduced into his body the right metal-compounds. To obtain those compounds, he has to experiment on metals with quicksilver or iron. In the first case, he becomes a 'quicksilver *zawgyee*' and in the second, an 'iron *zawgyee*', but both have the same powers. A *zawgyee* lives for millions of years, and can travel in the air, in water, or under the earth, for his body has reached the state when it is beyond the ordinary laws of nature. A halfway stage in the experiments is reached when a 'stone of live metal' (equivalent to the medieval 'philosopher's stone') is obtained. A person in actual possession of the stone can fly in the air and travel under the earth, but his powers are entirely dependent on the stone, i.e. his body is still an ordinary human body. The stone turns lead into silver and brass into gold. It will be seen that a Burman striving to become a *zawgyee* has much in common with the medieval European alchemist.

The beliefs connected with the *zawgyee* are still widely current. For a detailed account of Burmese alchemy, see the writer's 'Alchemy and Alchemists in Burma' in *Folk-Lore*, December 1933.

[113]

601 t'i hnga "one bone" The Chinese terms hei ku-t'ou and pe ku-t'ou must be regarded simply as translations of native Lolo terms. Insofar as the writer is aware, this obvious explanation has not been suggested by previous writers in the field.

The custom whereby the bride returns for a visit to her parent's home, already observed among the Southern Lolo, is also in evidence among their northern neighbors. Among the Lolopho (Liétard, 1913, pp. 152 and sq.), the bride is carried to the groom's home by her elder sister, and remains there for from two to four days, in the company of her elder sister. The couple then pass several days with the bride's parents, after which the bride returns to her husband's home to stay. Hadrolle (p. 539) records a similar custom for the Eul-yi-tseu (=Uln), but states that this is now disappearing in the face of Chinese influence. Here the couple remain three days with the family of the groom, then return to the bride's home, where the groom remains only overnight but the bride lingers for from eight to ten days before rejoining her husband.

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25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 APl Burma
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280. KOTHEMA YON (p. 191).

of the unsuccessfully vaccinated caught the disease, and ten of them died. None of the forty-four were attacked. These statistics could be multiplied. The medicine-dealers keep many of the crude commercial drugs, besides simples of their own collecting. Of the former, the principal are aloes, jalap, croton-seed, senna, bitter barks, catechu, opium, camphor, ginger, cardamom and other aromatics. The medicinal use of castor-oil is not known, though the plant is common. Spirits are now used medicinally. Many of the vegetable remedies are almost inert (see *The Burmese, what do they know of medicine?* by Dr. D. H. Cullimore). But there is one that deserves to be known, namely, the Shan remedy for tape-worm, *tôssé*, which is both effectual and mild. Among the mineral drugs are mercury, calomel, sulphur, blue and green vitriols, alum, salammoniac, nitre. There is a whole category of supposititious remedies, tiger's gall, rhinoceros' blood, ant-eater's scales, and so forth; they are charred before being made up. Allied to this class of remedies is that of charms, the vendors of which (nat-wives—*nakkadáw*) trade on the superstition that disease is caused by demons. Every patient will be as particular to mention his star as to describe his complaint. He will be advised to avoid certain classes of remedies on certain days. The "Sunday son" must not purge on Friday, and so on. In times of epidemic and panic, *thèbbnzedi* are erected at every house, as they likewise are in cases of sickness (No. 431). They are merely of sand, held together with circles of bast. Sometimes they are erected to avert calamity declared to be impending in a *shwepo-khwàsa*, a message on gold foil dropped from heaven by a *Thadyá* (p. 186). Images are dedicated

281. CHILDREN'S BAZÁR (p. 191).

29: Slater M-4 (no date) 1951 APl Burma
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